

THE
GRAVE.
A
POEM.

By ROBERT BLAIR.

The house appointed for all living. JOB.

THE SEVENTH EDITION.

To which is added,

AN ELEGY

Written in a

COUNTRY CHURCH-YARD.

By Mr GRAY.

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G R A V E.
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P O E M.

WHILST some affect the sun, and some the shade,

Some flee the city, some the hermitage ;
Their aims as various, as the roads they take
In journeying through life ;—the task be mine
To paint the gloomy horrors of the *Tomb* ;
Th' appointed place of rendezvous, where all
These travellers meet.—Thy succours I implore,
Eternal King ! whose potent arm sustains
The keys of hell and death.—The GRAVE, dread
thing !

Men shiver when thou'rt nam'd : Nature appall'd,
Shakes off her wonted firmness.—Ah ! how dark
Thy long-extended realms, and rueful wastes !
Where nought but Silence reigns, and Night, dark
Night,

Dark as was *Chaos*, ere the infant Sun
Was roll'd together, or had try'd his beams

A 3

Athwart the gloom profound.—The sickly taper,
 By glimmering thro' thy low-brow'd misty vaults,
 (Furr'd round with mouldy damp, and ropy slime,)
 Lets fall a supernumerary horror,
 And only serves to make thy night more irksome.
 Well do I know thee by thy trusty Yew,
 Cheerless, unsocial plant ; that loves to dwell
 'Midst sculls and coffins, epitaphs and worms :
 Where light-heel'd ghosts, and visionary shades,
 Beneath the wan cold moon (as fame reports)
 Embodiy'd, thick, perform their mystic rounds.
 No other merriment, dull tree, is thine.

SEE yonder hallow'd Fane ;—the pious work
 Of names once fam'd, now dubious or forgot,
 And bury'd 'midst the wreck of things which
 were ;

There ly interr'd the more illustrious dead.
 The wind is up : hark ! how it howls ! Methinks
 Till now I never heard a sound so dreary :
 Doors creak, and windows clap, and night's foul
 bird,

Rook'd in the spire, screams loud : the gloomy isles
 Black plaister'd, and hung round with shreds of
 'scutcheons

And tatter'd coats of arms, send back the sound
 Laden with heavier airs, from the low vaults,

The mansions of the dead.—Rous'd from their
slumbers,

In grim array the grisly spectres rise,
Grin horrible, and, obstinately sullen,
Pass and repass, hush'd as the foot of Night.
Again the Screech-owl shrieks : ungracious sound !
I'll hear no more, it makes one's blood run chill.

QUITE round the pile, a row of reverend elms,
(Coæval near with that), all ragged shew,
Long lash'd by the rude winds. Some rift half
down

Their branchless trunks ; others so thin a top,
That scarce two crows can lodge in the same tree.
Strange things, the neighbours say, have happen'd
here :

Wild shrieks have issu'd from the hollow tombs :
Dead men have come again and walk'd about ;
And the great bell has toll'd, unring, untouch'd.
(Such tales their chear at Wake or Gossiping,
When it draws near to witching time of night.)

Or, in the lone church-yard at night I've seen,
By glimpse of moon-shine chequering through the
trees,

The school-boy with his satchel in his hand,
Whistling aloud to bear his courage up,

And lightly tripping o'er the long flat stones,
 (With nettles skirted, and with moss o'ergrown),
 That tell in homely phrase who ly below.
 Sudden he starts, and hears, or thinks he hears
 The sound of something purring at his heels;
 Full fast he flies, and dares not look behind him,
 Till out of breath he overtakes his fellows;
 Who gather round, and wonder at the tale
 Of horrid *Apparition*, tall and ghastly,
 That walks at dead of night, or takes his stand
 O'er some new open'd grave; and (strange to tell!)
 Evanishes at crowing of the cock.

THE new-made *Widow*, too, I've sometimes
 'spy'd,
 Sad sight! slow moving o'er the prostrate dead:
 Listless, she crawls along in doleful black,
 Whilst bursts of sorrow gush from either eye,
 Fast falling down her now untasted cheek.
 Prone on the lowly grave of the dear man
 She drops; whilst busy meddling Memory,
 In barbarous succession musters up
 The past endearments of their softer hours,
 Tenacious of its theme. Still, still she thinks
 She sees him, and indulging the fond thought,
 Clings yet more closely to the senseless turf,
 Nor heeds the passenger who looks that way,

INVIDIOUS *Grave*!—how dost thou rend in sunder
Whom Love has knit, and Sympathy made one?
A tie more stubborn far than Nature's band.

Friendship! mysterious cement of the soul;
Sweetner of life, and folder of society,

I owe thee much. Thou hast deserv'd from me,
Far, far beyond what I can ever pay.

Oft have I prov'd the labours of thy love,
And the warm efforts of the gentle heart,

Anxious to please.—Oh! when my friend and I
In some thick wood have wander'd heedless on,

Hid from the vulgar eye, and sat us down
Upon the sloping cowslip-cover'd bank,

Where the pure limpid stream has slid along
In grateful errors through the under-wood,

Sweet murmuring; methought the shrill-tongu'd
Thrush

Mended his song of love; the sooty Black-bird
Mellow'd his pipe, and soften'd every note:

The Eglantine smell'd sweeter, and the Rose
Assum'd a dye more deep; whilst ev'ry flower

Vy'd with its fellow-plant in luxury
Of dress.—Oh! then, the longest summer's day

Seem'd too too much in haste: still the full heart
Had not imparted half: 'twas happiness

Too exquisite to last. Of joys departed,
Not to return, how painful the remembrance!

DULL *Grave*—thou spoil'st the dance of youthful blood,

Strik'st out the dimple from the cheek of Mirth,
And ev'ry smirking feature from the face;
Branding our *laughter* with the name of *madness*.
Where are the *jesters* now? the men of health,
Complexionally pleasant? Where the *Droll*,
Whose ev'ry look and gesture was a joke
To clapping theatres and shouting crowds,
And made ev'n thick-lip'd musing Melancholy
To gather up her face into a smile
Before she was aware? Ah! sullen now,
And dumb as the green turf that covers them.

WHERE are the mighty thunderbolts of war?
The *Roman Caesars*, and the *Grecian Chiefs*,
The boast of story? Where the hot-brain'd youth,
Who the *Tiara* at his pleasure tore
From Kings of all the then discover'd globe;
And cry'd, forsooth, because his arm was hamper'd,
And had not room enough to do its work?
Alas! how slim, dishonourably slim,
And cram'd into a space we blush to name!
Proud *Royalty*! how alter'd in thy looks!
How blank thy features, and how wan thy hue!
Son of the morning! whither art thou gone!
Where hast thou hid thy many-spangled head,

And the majestic menace of thine eyes
 Felt from afar ? Pliant and powerless now,
 Like new-born infant wound up in his swatches,
 Or victim tumbled flat upon its back,
 That throbs beneath the sacrificer's knife.
 Mute, must thou bear the strife of little tongues,
 And coward insults of the base-born croud ;
 That grudge a privilege thou never hadst,
 But, only hop'd for in the peaceful *Grave*,
 Of being unmolested and alone.

Arabia's gums and odoriferous drugs,
 And honours by the *Heralds* duly paid
 In mode and form, ev'n to a very scruple ;
 Oh cruel *Irony* ! these come too late ;
 And only mock, whom they were meant to honour.
 Surely there's not a dungeon-slave that's bury'd
 In the high-way, unshrouded and uncoffin'd,
 But lyes as soft, and sleeps as sound as he.
 Sorry pre-eminence of high descent,
 Above the vulgar born, to rot in state.

BUT see ! the well-plum'd *Hearse* comes nodding on
 Stately and slow ; and properly attended
 By the whole sable tribe, that painful watch
 The sick man's door, and live upon the dead,
 By letting out their persons by the hour,
 To mimic sorrow, when the heart's not sad.

How rich the trappings ! now they're all unfurl'd,
And glittering in the sun ; triumphant entries
Of Conquerors, and Coronation-pomps,
In glory scarce exceed. Great gluts of people
Retard th' unwieldy show ; whilst from the case-
ments

And houses tops, ranks behind ranks close wedg'd
Hang bellying o'er. But tell us, why this waste ?
Why this ado in earthing up a carcase
That's fall'n into disgrace, and in the nostril
Smells horrible ?——Ye *Undertakers*, tell us,
'Midst all the gorgeous figures you exhibit,
Why is the principal conceal'd, for which
You make this mighty stir.——'Tis wisely done :
What would offend the eye in a good picture,
The painter casts discreetly into shades.

PROUD *Lineage*, now how little thou appear'st
Below the envy of the private man.

Honour, that meddlesome officious ill,
Pursues thee ev'n to death ; nor there stops short.
Strange persecution ! when the *Grave* itself
Is no protection from rude sufferance.

ABSURD to think to over-reach the *Grave*,
And from the wreck of names to rescue ours.
The best concerted schemes men lay for fame

Die fast away: only themselves die faster.
 The far-fam'd *Sculptor*, and the laurell'd *Bard*,
 Those bold insurers of deathless fame,
 Supply their little feeble aids in vain.
 The tapering *Pyramid*, th' *Ægyptian's* pride,
 And wonder of the world, whose spiky top
 Has wounded the thick cloud, and long outliv'd
 The angry shaking of the winter's storm;
 Yet spent at last by th' injuries of heaven,
 Shatter'd with age, and furrow'd o'er with years,
 The mystic cone with hieroglyphics crusted,
 At once gives way. Oh! lamentable sight:
 The labour of whole ages, lumbers down,
 A hideous and mishapen length of ruins.
 Sepulchral columns wrestle but in vain
 With all-subduing Time: her cank'ring hand
 With calm delib'rate malice wasteth them:
 Worn on the edge of days the brass consumes,
 The busto moulders, and the deep-cut marble,
 Unsteady to the steel, gives up its charge.
Ambition, half convicted of her folly,
 Hangs down the head, and reddens at the tale.

HERE all the mighty *Troublers of the earth*,
 Who swam to sov'reign rule thro' seas of blood;
 Th' oppressive, sturdy, man-destroying Villains,
 Who ravag'd kingdoms and laid empires waste,

And in a cruel wantonness of power
 Thinn'd states of half their people, and gave up
 To want the rest ; now, like a storm that's spent,
 Ly hush'd, and meanly sneak behind the covert.
 Vain thought ! to hide them from the gen'ral scorn
 That haunts and doggs them like an injur'd ghost
 Implacable.——Here too the *petty Tyrant*,
 Whose scant domains *Geographer* ne'er notie'd,
 And, well for neighbouring grounds, of arms as short,
 Who fix'd his iron talons on the poor,
 And grip'd them like some lordly beast of prey ;
 Deaf to the forceful cries of gnawing Hunger,
 And piteous plaintive voice of Misery ;
 (As if a *Slave* was not a shred of nature,
 Of the same common nature with his *Lord*) ;
 Now tame and humble, like a child that's whip'd,
 Shakes hands with dust, and calls the worm his
 kinsman ;
 Nor pleads his rank and birthright. Under ground
Precedency's a jest ; Vassal and Lord,
 Grossly familiar, side by side consume.

WHEN self-esteem, or others adulation,
 Would cunningly persuade us we were something
 Above the common level of our kind,
 The *Grave* gainsays the smooth-complexion'd flatt'ry,
 And with blunt truth acquaints us what we are.

BEAUTY—thou pretty play-thing, dear deceit,
 That steals so softly o'er the stripling's heart,
 And gives it a new pulse, unknown before,
 The *Grave* discredits thee: thy charms expung'd,
 Thy roses faded, and thy lilies soil'd,
 What hast thou more to boast of? Will thy Lovers
 Flock round thee now, to gaze and do thee homage?
 Methinks I see thee with thy head now laid,
 Whilst surfeited upon thy damask cheek
 The high-fed *Worm*, in lazy volumes roll'd,
 Riots unscar'd.—For this, was all thy caution?
 For this, thy painful labours at thy glass?
 T' improve those charms, and keep them in repair,
 For which the spoiler thanks thee not. Foul feeder,
 Coarse fare and carrion please thee full as well,
 And leave as keen a relish on the sense.
 Look how the fair one weeps!—the conscious tears
 Stand thick as dew-drops on the bells of flow'rs:
 Honest effusion! the swoln heart in vain
 Works hard to put a gloss on its distress.

STRENGTH too—thou surly, and less gentle boast
 Of those that loud laugh at the village ring;
 A fit of common sickness pulls thee down
 With greater ease, than e'er thou didst the stripling
 That rashly dar'd thee to th' unequal fight.
 What groan was that I heard?—deep groan indeed!

With anguish heavy laden ; let me trace it :
 From yonder bed it comes, where the strong man,
 By stronger arm belabour'd, gasps for breath
 Like a hard-hunted beast. How his great heart
 Beats thick ! his roomy chest by far too scant
 To give the lungs full play.—What now avail
 The strong-built sinewy limbs, and well-spread
 shoulders ?

See how he tugs for life, and lays about him,
 Mad with his pain !—Eager he catches hold
 Of what comes next to hand, and grasps it hard,
 Just like a creature drowning ; hideous fight !
 Oh ! how his eyes stand out, and stare full ghastly !
 Whilst the distemper's rank and deadly venom
 Shoots like a burning arrow cross his bowels,
 And drinks his marrow up.—Heard you that
 groan ?

It was his last.—See how the great *Goliath*,
 Just like a child that brawl'd itself to rest,
 Lyes still.—What mean'st thou then, O mighty
 Boaster,

To vaunt of nerves of thine ? What means the Bull,
 Unconscious of his strength, to play the coward,
 And flee before a feeble thing like man ;
 That, knowing well the slackness of his arm,
 Trusts only in the well-invented knife ?

WITH *study* pale, and midnight vigils spent,
 The star-surveying *Sage* close to his eye
 Applies the sight-invigorating Tube ;
 And travelling thro' the boundless length of space,
 Marks well the courses of the far-seen orbs
 That roll with regular confusion there,
 In ecstacy of thought. But ah ! proud Man,
 Great heights are hazardous to the weak head ;
 Soon, very soon, thy firmest footing fails ;
 And down thou drop'st into that darksome place,
 Where *nor device nor knowledge* ever came.

HERE the *Tongue-warrior* lyes disabled now,
 Disarm'd, dishonour'd, like a wretch that's gagg'd
 And cannot tell his ail to passers by.
 Great men of language,—whence this mighty
 change,

This dumb despair, and drooping of the head ?
 Tho' strong Persuasion hung upon thy lip,
 And sly Insinuation's softer arts
 In ambush lay about thy flowing Tongue ;
 Alas ! how chop-fall'n now ? Thick mists and silence
 Rest, like a weary cloud, upon thy breast
 Unceasing.—Ah ! where is the lifted arm,
 The strength of action, and the force of words,
 The well-turn'd period, and the well-tun'd voice,
 With all the lesser ornaments of Phrase ?

Ah! fled for ever, as they ne'er had been,
 Raz'd from the book of Fame: or, more provoking
 Perchance some hackney hunger-bitten Scribbler
 Insults thy memory, and blots thy tomb
 With long flat narrative, or duller rhimes,
 With heavy halting pace that drawl along;
 Enough to rouse a dead man into rage,
 And warm with red resentment the wan cheek,

HERE, the great masters of the *Healing-art*,
 These mighty mock defrauders of the *Tomb*,
 Spite of their *juleps* and *catholicons*
 Resign to Fate.—Proud *Æsculapius'* son!
 Where are thy boasted implements of Art,
 And all thy well-cramm'd magazines of Health?
 Nor hill nor vale, as far as ship could go,
 Nor margin of the gravel-bottom'd brook,
 Escap'd thy rifling hand:—from stubborn shrubs
 Thou wrung'st their shy-retiring Virtues out,
 And vex'd them in the fire: nor fly nor insect,
 Nor writhy-snake, escap'd thy deep research.
 But why this *apparatus*? why this cost?
 Tell us, thou doughty keeper from the *Grave*,
 Where are thy *recipes* and *cordials* now,
 With the long list of vouchers for thy cures?
 Alas! thou speakest not.—The bold impostor
 Looks not more silly, when the cheat's found out

HERE the lank-sided *Miser*, worst of felons,
 Who meanly stole, (discreditable shift),
 From back, and belly too, their proper cheer,
 Eas'd of a tax it irk'd the wretch to pay
 To his own carcase; now lyes cheaply lodg'd,
 By clam'rous Appetites no longer teaz'd,
 Nor tedious Bills of charges and repairs.
 But ah! where are his rents, his comings-in?
 Ay! now you've made the rich man poor indeed!
Robb'd of his Gods, what has he left behind?
 Oh! curst lust of Gold; when for thy sake,
 The fool throws up his int'rest in both Worlds:
 First starv'd in this, then damn'd in that to come.

How shocking must thy summons be, O *Death*!
 To him, that is at ease in his possessions;
 Who counting on long years of pleasure here,
 Is quite unfurnish'd for that world to come?
 In that dread moment, how the frantic Soul
 Raves round the walls of her clay tenement,
 Runs to each avenue, and shrieks for help,
 But shrieks in vain!—How wishfully she looks
 On all she's leaving, now no longer her's!
 A little longer, yet a little longer,
 Oh! might she stay, to wash away her stains,
 And fit her for her passage.—Mournful sight!
 Her very eyes weep blood;—and every Groan

She heaves is big with horror.—But the Foe,
 Like a stanch murd'rer, steady to his purpose,
 Pursues her close through every lane of Life,
 Nor misses once the track, but presses on ;
 'Till forc'd at last to the tremendous verge,
 At once she sinks to everlasting ruin.

SURE 'tis a serious thing to *die* ! My soul,
 What a strange moment must it be, when near
 Thy journey's end, thou hast the gulf in view !
 That awful gulf, no mortal e'er repass'd
 To tell what's doing on the other side.
 Nature runs back, and shudders at the sight,
 And every life-string bleeds at thoughts of parting
 For part they must : *Body* and *Soul* must part ;
 Fond couple ; link'd more close than wedded pair
 This wings its way to its almighty Source,
 The Witness of its actions, now its Judge ;
 That drops into the dark and noisome *Grave*,
 Like a disabled pitcher of no use.

If *Death* was nothing, and nought *after death* ;
 If when men dy'd, at once they ceas'd to be,
 Returning to the barren womb of Nothing,
 Whence first they sprung, then might the Debauchee
 Untrembling mouth the Heavens :—Then might
 the Drunkard

Reel over his full bowl, and, when 'tis drain'd,
 Fill up another to the brim, and laugh
 At the poor bugbear *Death*:—Then might the Wretch
 That's weary of the world, and tir'd of life,
 At once give each inquietude the slip,
 By stealing out of being when he pleas'd,
 And by what way ; whether by hemp or steel.
Death's thousand doors stand open.—Who could force
 The ill-pleas'd guest to sit out his full time,
 Or blame him if he goes ?—Sure he does well,
 That helps himself as timely as he can,
 When able.—But if there is an *Hereafter*,
 And that there is, Conscience, uninfluenc'd
 And suffer'd to speak out, tells ev'ry man ;
 Then must it be an awful thing *to die* :
 More horrid yet to die by one's own hand.
Self-murder !—name it not : our Island's shame :
 That makes her the reproach of neighbouring states.
 Shall Nature, swerving from her earliest dictate
 Self-preservation, fall by her own act ?
 Forbid it Heaven !—Let not, upon disgust,
 The shameless hand be foully crimson'd o'er
 With blood of its own lord.—Dreadful attempt !
 Just reeking from self-slaughter, in a rage
 To rush into the presence of our Judge ;
 As if we challeng'd him to do his worst,
 And matter'd not his wrath.—Unheard of tortures

Must be reserv'd for such : these herd together ;
 The common damn'd shun their society,
 And look upon themselves as Fiends less foul.
 Our time is fix'd, and all our days are number'd ;
 How long, how short, we know not :—this we know,
 Duty requires we calmly wait the summons,
 Nor dare to stir till Heav'n shall give permission :
 Like Centries that must keep their destin'd stand,
 And wait th' appointed hour, till they're reliev'd.
 Those only are the Brave that keep their ground,
 And keep it to the last. To run away
 Is but a coward's trick : to run away
 From this world's ills, that at the very worst
 Will soon blow o'er, thinking to mend ourselves,
 By boldly ven'tring on a world unknown,
 And plunging headlong in the dark ;—'tis mad ;
 No frenzy half so desperate as this.

TELL us, ye Dead ; will none of you, in pity
 To those you left behind, disclose the secret ?
 Oh ! that some courteous ghost would blab it out ;
 What 'tis you are, and we must shortly be.
 I've heard, that souls departed, have sometimes
 Forewarn'd men of their death :—'Twas kindly done
 To knock, and give the alarm.—But what means
 This stinted charity ?—'Tis but lame kindness
 That does its work by halves.—Why might you not

Tell us what 'tis to die?—Do the strict laws
 Of your society forbid your speaking
 Upon a point so nice?—I'll ask no more :
 Sullen, like lamps in sepulchres, your shine
 Enlightens but yourselves. Well,—'tis no matter ;
 A very little time will clear up all,
 And make us learn'd as you are, and as close.

DEATH's shafts fly thick :—Here falls the Village-
 swain,

And there his pamper'd Lord.—The cup goes
 round :

And who so artful as to put it by !

'Tis long since *Death* had the majority ;

Yet strange ! *the Living lay it not to heart.*

See yonder maker of the dead man's bed,

The *Sexton*, hoary-headed chronicler,

Of hard unmeaning face, down which ne'er stole

gentle tear ; with mattock in his hand

Digs through whole rows of Kindred and Ac-
 quaintance,

Far far his juniors.—Scarce a scull's cast up,

But well he knew its Owner, and can tell

Some passage of his life.—Thus hand in hand

The sot has walk'd with *Death* twice twenty years ;

And yet ne'er Yonker on the green laughs louder,

Or clubs a sinuttier tale :—When Drunkards meet,

None sings a merrier catch, or lends a hand
 More willing to his cup.--Poor wretch! he minds not,
 That soon some trusty Brother of the trade
 Shall do for him what he has done for thousands.

ON this side, and on that, men see their friends
 Drop off, like leaves in autumn; yet launch out
 Into fantastic schemes, which the long Livers
 In the world's hale and undegen'rate days
 Could scarce have leisure for.—Fools that we are,
 Never to think of *Death* and of *ourselves*
 At the same time: as if to learn to die
 Were no concern of ours.—Oh! more than sottish,
 For creatures of a Day in gamesome mood,
 To frolic on Eternity's dread brink
 Unapprehensive; when, for ought we know,
 The very first swollen surge shall sweep us in.
 Think we, or think we not, *Time* hurries on
 With a resistless unremitting stream;
 Yet treads more soft than e'er did midnight-thief,
 That slides his hand under the Miser's pillow,
 And carries off his prize.—What is *this World*?
 What? but a spacious *burial-field* unwall'd,
 Strew'd with Death's spoils, the spoils of animals
 Savage and tame, and full of dead mens bones.
 The very turf on which we tread once liv'd;
 And we that live must lend our carcases

To cover our own offspring :—In their turns
 They too must cover theirs.—'Tis *here* all meet,
 The shiv'ring *Icelander*, and sunburnt *Moor* ;
 Men of all climes, that never met before ;
 And of all creeds, the *Jew*, the *Turk*, the *Christian*.
Here the proud *Prince*, and *Favourite* yet prouder,
 His Sov'reign's keeper, and the people's scourge,
 Are huddled out of sight.—*Here* ly abash'd

The great *Negotiators* of the earth,
 And celebrated *Masters of the balance*,
 Deep read in stratagems, and wiles of courts.

Now vain their *Treaty-skill* :—Death scorns to treat.
Here the o'erloaded *Slave* flings down his burden
 From his gall'd shoulders ;—and when the cruel
 Tyrant,

With all his guards and tools of power about him,
 Is meditating new unheard-of hardships,
 Mocks his short arm ;—and quick as thought escapes
 Where Tyrants vex not, and the Weary rest.

Here the warm *Lover*, leaving the cool shade,
 The tell-tale *Echo*, and the babbling stream,
 (Time out of mind the fav'rite seats of Love),
 Fast by his gentle mistress lays him down,
 Unblasted by foul tongue.—*Here* friends and foes
 Ly close ; unmindful of their former feuds.
 The lawn-robb'd *Prelate* and plain *Presbyter*,
 E'er while that stood aloof, as shy to meet,

Familiar mingle *here*, like sister streams
 That some rude interposing rock had split.
Here is the large-limb'd *Peasant*:—*Here* the *Child*
 Of a span long, that never saw the sun,
 Nor press'd the nipple, strangled in Life's porch.
Here is the *Mother*, with her sons and daughters:
 The barren *Wife*, and long-demurring *Maid*,
 Whose lonely unappropriated sweets
 Smil'd like yon knot of cousslips on the cliff,
 Not to be come at by the willing hand.
Here are the *Prude* severe, and gay *Coquet*,
 The sober *Widow*, and the young green *Virgin*,
 Cropp'd like a rose before 'tis fully blown,
 Or half its worth disclos'd. Strange medley *here*!
Here garrulous *Old Age* winds up his tale;
 And jovial *Youth*, of lightsome vacant heart,
 Whose ev'ry day was made of melody,
 Hears not the voice of mirth.—The shrill-tongu'd
 Shrew,
 Meek as the turtle-dove, forgets her chiding.
Here are the wise, the generous, and the brave;
 The just, the good, the worthless, the profane,
 The downright clown, and perfectly well-bred;
 The fool, the churl, the scoundrel, and the mean;
 The supple statesman, and the patriot stern;
 The wrecks of Nations, and the spoils of Time,
 With all the lumber of six thousand years.

POOR *Man* !—how happy once in thy *first state* !
 When yet but warm from thy great Maker's hand,
 He stamp'd thee with his image, and, well pleas'd,
 Smil'd on his last fair work.—Then all was well.
 Sound was the *body*, and the *soul* serene ;
 Like two sweet instruments, ne'er out of tune,
 That play their several parts.—Nor head, nor heart,
 Offer'd to ache : nor was there cause they should ;
 For all was pure within : no fell remorse,
 Nor anxious castings-up of what might be,
 Alarm'd his peaceful bosom.—Summer seas
 Shew not more smooth, when kiss'd by southern
 winds

Just ready to expire.—Scarce importun'd,
 The generous soil, with a luxurious hand,
 Offer'd the various produce of the year,
 And ev'ry thing most perfect in its kind.
 Blessed ! thrice blessed days !—But ah ! how short !
 Bless'd as the pleasing dreams of Holy Men ;
 But fugitive like those, and quickly gone.
 Oh ! slipp'ry state of things.—What sudden turns !
 What strange vicissitudes in the first leaf
 Of man's sad history !——To-day most happy,
 And ere to-morrow's sun has set, most abject.
 How scant the space between these vast extremes !
 Thus far'd it with *our Sire* :—Not long h'enjoy'd
 His paradise.—Scarce had the happy tenant

Of the fair spot due time to prove its sweets,
 Or sum them up, when strait he must be gone,
 Ne'er to return again.—And must he go?
 Can nought compound for the first dire offence
 Of erring man?—Like one that is condemn'd,
 Fain would he trifle time with idle talk,
 And parley with his fate.—But 'tis in vain.
 Not all the lavish odours of the place,
 Offer'd in incense, can procure his pardon,
 Or mitigate his doom.—A mighty Angel,
 With flaming sword, forbids his longer stay,
 And drives the loiterer forth; nor must he take
 One last and farewell round.—At once he lost
 His glory, and his God.—If mortal now,
 And sorely maim'd, no wonder.—*Man has sinn'd.*
 Sick of his bliss, and bent on new adventures,
Evil he would needs try: nor try'd in vain.
 (Dreadful experiment! destructive measure!
 Where the worst thing could happen, is success.)
 Alas! too well he sped:—the *Good* he scorn'd
 Stalk'd off reluctant, like an ill-us'd ghost,
 Not to return;—or if it did, its visits,
 Like those of *Angels*, short and far between:
 Whilst the black *Dæmon*, with his hell-scap'd train,
 Admitted once into its better room,
 Grew loud and mutinous, nor would be gone;
 Lording it o'er the *Man*: who now too late

Saw the rash error, which he could not mend :
 An error fatal not to him alone,
 But to his future sons, his fortune's heirs.
 Inglorious bondage !—Human nature groans
 Beneath a vassalage so vile and cruel,
 And its vast body bleeds through ev'ry vein.

WHAT havoc hast thou made, foul monster, *Sin* !
 Greatest and first of Ills.—The fruitful parent
 Of woes of all dimensions !—But for *thee*
 Sorrow had never been.—Ah-noxious Thing,
 Of vilest nature !—Other sorts of Evils
 Are kindly circumscrib'd, and have their bounds.
 The fierce *Volcano*, from his burning entrails
 That belches molten Stone and globes of Fire,
 Involv'd in pitchy clouds of smoke and stench,
 Marring the adjacent fields for some leagues round,
 And there it stops.—The big-swoln *Inundation*,
 Of mischief more diffusive, raving loud,
 Buries whole tracks of country, threat'ning more,
 But that too has its shore it cannot pass.
 More dreadful far than these ! *Sin* has laid waste,
 Not here and there a country, but a *World* :
 Dispatching at a wide-extended blow
 Entire mankind ; and for their sakes defacing
 A whole Creation's beauty with rude hands ;
 Blasting the foodful grain, the loaded branches,

To edge the appetite : *Thou* seekest none.

It thinks the countless swarms thou hast devour'd,
 And thousands that each hour thou gobblest up,
This, less than *this*, might gorge thee to the full.
 But ah ! rapacious still, thou gap'st for more :
 Like one, whole days defrauded of his meals,
 On whom lank Hunger lays her skinny hand,
 And whets to keenest eagerness his cravings.
 As if diseases, massacres, and poison,
 Famine, and war, were not thy Caterers.

BUT know, that thou *must* render up thy Dead,
 And with high Int'rest too.—They are not thine ;
 But only in thy keeping for a season,
 Till the great promis'd day of Restitution ;
 When loud diffusive sound of brazen trump
 Of strong-lung'd Cherub, shall alarm thy Captives,
 And rouse the long, long sleepers into life,
 Day-light, and liberty.—

Then must thy gates fly open, and reveal
 The mines that lay long forming under ground,
 Their dark cells immur'd ; but now full ripe,
 And pure as silver from the crucible,
 That twice has stood the torture of the fire
 And inquisition of the forge.—We know
 Th' illustrious Deliverer of mankind,
 THE SON OF GOD, thee foil'd.—Him in thy pow'r

Thou couldst not hold :—self-vigorous he rose,
 And shaking off thy fetters, soon retook
 Those spoils his voluntary yielding lent :
 (Sure pledge of our releasement from thy thrall
 Twice twenty days he sojourn'd here on earth,
 And shew'd himself alive to *chosen Witnesses*,
 By proofs so strong, that the most slow assenting
 Had not a scruple left.—This having done,
 He mounted up to heav'n.—Methinks I see him
 Climb the aerial heights, and glide along
 Athwart the severing clouds : but the faint eye,
 Flung backwards in the chace, soon drops its hold
 Disabled quite, and jaded with pursuing.
 Heaven's portals wide expand to let him in ;
 Nor are his friends shut out : As some great Prince
 Not for himself alone procures admission,
 But for his train.—It was his Royal will,
 That where he is, there should his followers be,
Death only lyes between.—A gloomy path !
 Made yet more gloomy by our coward fears :
 But nor untrod, nor tedious : the fatigue
 Will soon go off.—Beside, there's no by-road
 To bliss.—Then, why, like ill-condition'd children
 Start we at transient hardships in the way
 That leads to purer air, and softer skies,
 And a ne'er-setting sun ?—Fools that we are !
 We wish to be, where sweets unwith'ring bloom

at Strait our wish revoke, and will not go.
 have I teen, upon a summer's ev'n,
 sit by the riv'let's brink, a Youngster play :
 how wishfully he looks to stem the tide !
 his moment resolute, next unresolv'd :
 at last he dips his foot ; but as he dips,
 his fears redouble, and he runs away
 from th' inoffensive stream, unmindful now
 of all the flow'rs that paint the further bank,
 and smil'd so sweet of late.—Thrice welcome

Death !

that after many a painful bleeding step
 conducts us to our home, and lands us safe
 on the long-wish'd for shore.—Prodigious change !
 our bane turn'd to a blessing !—*Death*, disarm'd,
 loses his feltness quite.—All thanks to him
 who scourg'd the venom out.—Sure *the last end*
 of the good man is *Peace* !—How calm his *Exit* !
 Night-dews fall not more gently to the ground,
 or weary worn-out winds expire so soft.
 Hold him in the evening-tide of Life,
 whose life well spent, whose early care it was
 his ripper years should not upbraid his green :
 unperceiv'd degrees he wears away ;
 like the sun, seems larger at his setting.
 (How high in his faith and hopes,) look how he reaches
 for the prize in view ! and, like a bird

That's hamper'd, struggles hard to get away :
 Whilst the glad gates of sight are wide expanded
 To let new glories in, the first fair fruits
 Of the fast-coming harvest.—*Then !—oh then !*
 Each earth-born joy grows vile, or disappears,
 Shrunk to a thing of nought.—Oh ! how he long
 To have his passport sign'd, and be dismiss'd !
 'Tis done ! and now he's happy !—The glad *Soul*
 Has not a wish uncrown'd.—Ev'n the lag *Flesh*
Rests too in Hope of meeting once again
 Its better half, never to sunder more.
 Nor shall it hope in vain :—The time draws
 When not a single spot of burial earth,
 Whether on Land, or in the spacious Sea,
 But must give back its long-committed dust
 Inviolat :—and faithfully shall these
 Make up the full account ; not the least atom
 Embezzl'd, or mislaid, of the whole tale.
 Each *Soul* shall have a *Body* ready furnish'd ;
 And each shall have his own.—Hence, ye profane
 Ask not, how this can be ?—Sure the same power
 That rear'd the piece at first, and took it down
 Can re-assemble the loose scatter'd parts,
 And put them as they were.—Almighty God
 Has done much more ; nor is his arm impair'd
 Through length of days : And what he can he will
 His Faithfulness stands bound to see it done.

When the dread trumpet sounds, the slumb'ring
dust,

(Not unattentive to the call), shall wake :

And ev'ry joint possess its proper place,

With a new elegance of form, unknown

To its first state.—Nor shall the conscious *Soul*

Mistake its partner, but amidst the Croud

Singling its other half, into its arms

Shall rush with all th' impatience of a man

That's new come home, who, having long been
absent,

With haste runs over ev'ry different room,

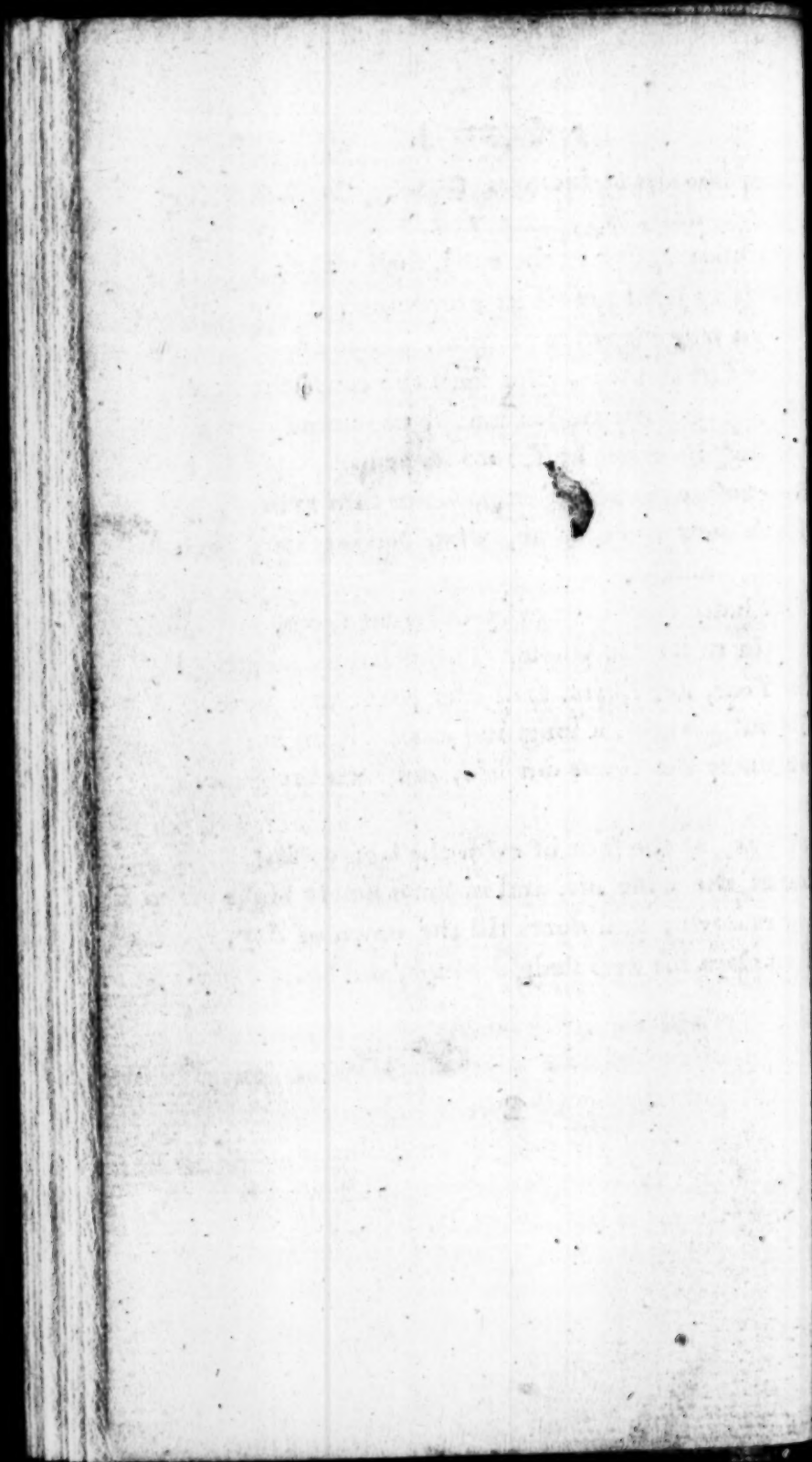
In pain to see the whole. Thrice happy meeting !

Nor *Time*, nor *Death*, shall ever part them more.

'Tis but a night, a long and moonless night;

We make the *Grave* our bed, and then are gone.

THUS, at the shut of ev'n, the weary Bird
Leaves the wide air, and in some lonely brake
Cowers down, and dozes till the dawn of day,
Then claps his well-fledg'd wings, and bears away.



An E L E G Y

WRITTEN IN A

COUNTRY CHURCH-YARD.

By MR GRAY.

THE curfew tolls the knell of parting day ;
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea ;
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his drony flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds ;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tow'r
The mopeing owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wand'ring near her secret bow'r,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,
The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
 Or busy housewife ply her evening care :
 No children run to lisp their Sire's return,
 Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
 Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke ;
 How jocund did they drive their team afield !
 How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
 Their homely joys and destiny obscure ;
 Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
 The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,
 And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
 Await alike th' inevitable hour :
 The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye Proud, impute to These the fault,
 If Mem'ry o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
 Where thro' the long-drawn idle and fretted vault
 The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust
 Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath ?
 Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
 Or Flatt'ry sooth the dull cold ear of Death ?

perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
 some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
 lands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,
 or wak'd to ecstasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page,
 rich with the spoils of Time, did ne'er unroll;
 still Penury repress'd their noble rage,
 and froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
 the dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;
 full many a flow'r is born to blush unseen,
 and waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village-Hampden, that with dauntless breast
 the little tyrant of his fields withstood;
 some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
 some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

Not to the applause of list'ning senates to command,
 nor to the threats of pain and ruin to despise,
 to scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
 nor to read their hist'ry in a nation's eyes,

their lot forbad; nor circumscrib'd alone
 their growing virtues, but their crimes confin'd;
 forbade to wade thro' slaughter to a throne,
 and shut the gates of mercy on mankind;

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
 To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
 Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
 With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding croud's ignoble strife,
 Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;
 Along the cool sequester'd vale of life
 They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect,
 Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
 With uncouth rhimes and shapeless sculpture deck'd
 Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd Muse,
 The place of fame and elegy supply:
 And many a holy text around she strews,
 That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who to dumb Forgetfulness a prey
 This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,
 Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
 Nor cast one longing ling'ring look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
 Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
 Ev'n from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
 Ev'n in our Ashes live their wonted Fires.

er thee, who, mindful of th' unhonour'd Dead,
 oft in these lines their artless tale relate ;
 chance, by lonely Contemplation led,
 the kindred Spirit shall enquire thy fate,

ply some hoary-headed Swain may say,
 Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
 Brushing with hasty steps the dews away
 To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

There at the foot of yonder nodding beech,
 That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
 His little length at noon-tide would he stretch,
 And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

Lard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
 Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove ;
 Now drooping, woeful, wan, like one forlorn,
 Or craz'd with care, or cross'd in hopeless love.

One morn I miss'd him on the custom'd hill,
 Along the heath and near his fav'rite tree ;
 Another came ; nor yet beside the rill,
 Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he.

The next, with dirges due, in sad array
 Now thro' the church-way path we saw him borne.
 Approach, and read (for thou canst read) the lay
 Grav'd on the stone beneath yon aged thorn.

The E P I T A P H

HERE rests his head upon the lap of Earth,
 A youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown;
 Fair Science frown'd not on his humble birth,
 And Melancholy mark'd him for her own.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere.
 Heav'n did a recompence as largely send:
 He gave to Mis'ry all he had, a tear,
 He gain'd from Heav'n ('twas all he wish'd) a friend.
 No farther seek his merits to disclose,
 Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
 (There they alike in trembling hope repose)
 The bosom of his Father and his God.

